

**AN ANALYSIS ON 6<sup>TH</sup> SEMESTER STUDENTS' TOEFL EXPERIENCE  
AT ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF TEACHERS TRAINING AND  
EDUCATION FACULTY OF PASIR PENGARAIAN UNIVERSITY**

**Rivi Antoni<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>English Lecturer at English Department of Pasir Pengaraian University  
email: antoni.rivi888@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

The main problems faced on this research are most of the students do not have a good preparation on following a test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL) and they are also poor in English skills. Purposes of this research are to explain how students' experiences at TOEFL test and what difficulties are found by the students at 6<sup>th</sup> semester of English Department of Pasir Pengaraian University in completing the TOEFL.

Since this research is descriptive qualitative research, the researcher use questionnaires, observation sheet, field note, and interview as the instrument in collecting the data needed. Statistical analysis was used in order to assist the researcher in analyzing the data found. All his students at TOEFL Class were taken as the participants of this research.

From the research findings, it can be concluded that most of the students do not have good preparation in completing the test. It can be shown from the result of the analysis where most of students complete their TOEFL test without having good strategy and having English skills. Second, it can be summarized that in listening section, the problem faced are that they get difficulties to understand the spoken language because the speaker speaks too fast and the hard materials are the reason given. In structure and written expression section, get difficulties in determining the subject and the verb of sentences because of limited knowledge on the strategies and could not differentiate which words function as a subject or a verb of a sentence. In reading section, students get difficulties to understand the meaning of written English. It happened because they have limited of vocabularies and some phrases. Moreover, the time available for the section is limited for them. From the written test, students have difficulties to start writing an essay and hard to develop the topic of the essay. The reason given because of block minded and the unfamiliar topic. Thus, the students spend longer time to think what to write and how to. And they could not write a complete essay. Finally, the effects of the problems on the TOEFL test are that students always give incorrect answers and they cannot produce a good essay in written section.

**Key words;** *TOEFL Experience, Preparation and English Skills*

**INTRODUCTION**

**A. Back ground of the Problem**

TOEFL has become one of the importance requirements to University students since it was determined as the requirement for academic demands. At University of Pasir

Pengaraian, TOEFL is also offered to students before they followed the research paper test. The test is usually carried out orderly when they are at the fourth grade. Passing the TOEFL is not as easy as they completed their English subjects. Most of them are

fail to fulfill the standardized grade ruled by University. Some issues on the TOEFL come appear to students and also their lecturers. Absolutely, all the issues have to be solved academically for better progress in the future.

### **B. Limited preparation on TOEFL**

From the researcher's previous observation, he found that students have problems in completing their TOEFL. The main problem faced is that the students do not have a good preparation before following a test of English as a foreign language. However, a good preparation needs to be planned and done by the candidate in order to get success on the test. Without a good preparation, the students might face some difficulties.

A good preparation refers to some cases such as what the test is like and what kind of strategies used. The fact shows that some students have limited knowledge about the test. Then, they do not prepare themselves with some strategies how to answer various questions given by the examiners. At section one; they do not know to complete several parts in listening section. Moreover, each of the part asks questions in difference styles. In section two; it seems the time given is not enough to finish the question about structure and written expression. Moreover in section three, it is hard for them to read a lot of paragraph. In the other words, a preparation before completing TOEFL help students to get success at the test carried out. Missing the preparation causes the students get problems to answer the questions.

### **C. Poor English Mastery**

Besides having problem with the preparation, students are also poor in English skills. The skills are

listening, speaking, reading and writing. As far as the researcher experiences in his teaching, some students have various problems with all the skills. Some students are problematic with speaking and listening. It is hard for them to communicate in English whether to listen or to speak. In the other cases, some students are confused with grammar and vocabulary. All those problems also cause the students get low with their English subject.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that there are two problem faced by the students in completing the TEFL. First, they do not have a good preparation before the test. And second, they do not master English skills well yet. That is why the researcher was interesting to carry out the research focusing on students' experience on test of English as a foreign language.

Based on Statement of the Problem above, the researcher formed the research questions as follow:

1. How is students' experience at TOEFL at 6<sup>th</sup> semester of English Department of Pasir Pengaraian University?
2. What difficulties are found by the students in completing the TOEFL?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **A. Nature of TOEFL**

Some definitions are given by experts related to the TOEFL. All propose that TOEFL is a standardized test at International level. Deborah (2001) states that TOEFL is a kind of English test in the world. It is only addressed to people who are not using English as their native language but as a second or a foreign language. It is a model used for academic purpo-

ses to measure an English foreign language learner's English skill.

In addition to the TOEFL, Yilmaz and Zwier (2005) state that there is no a question that the TOEFL test is the most widely accepted English-language test in the world. It is also the most highly respected English-language test in the world. In fact, it's the only test that simulates university classroom and campus life and was developed with the help of leading universities.

TOEFL as a standardized test has been widely used by international students who continue their studies to the foreign countries. Some students complete their test after having the test frequently. The standardized TOEFL score for admitting a University is different from other ones. The TOEFL score, which should be gained by students, is ruled by the authority at campus chosen.

Beside it might be used in academic purposes, TOEFL is also used in in the institutions such as government agencies and businesses. Some government offices have started applying TOEFL as one of requirements in job promotion or in their staffs' recruitment. This case is also followed by some businesses doers at private factories. By applying TOEFL as one of the requirements in job promotion and staffs' recruitment, the service qualities of the institutions are always kept well.

In order to get success in completing TOEFL test, Saifuddin (2006) proposes that it is important to have well preparation for the test previously. The purpose of TOEFL preparation is to help students understand how to prepare for the test effectively and to help you build the English skills you need to succeed.

## **B. TOEFL Format**

There are two formats offered in TOEFL test. Deborah (2001) says that both formats are paper format and computer format. He adds that the paper format has four sections. They are listening section, structure section, reading section and test of written English.

### **a. Listening section**

This section demands the examinees to demonstrate their ability to spoken English. The examinees must listen to various types of passage on a tape recording and respond to multiple choice questions about the passage.

### **b. Structure section**

This section demands the examinees to recognize grammatically correct English. Examines also must choose the correct way to complete sentences or find the errors in sentences.

### **c. Reading section**

This section demands the examinees to understand written English. Examines also must answer multiple choices questions about the ideas and the meaning of words in reading passages.

### **d. Test of Written English section**

This section demands the examinees to produced, organized and meaningful English. Examines also must write an essay on a given topic. But this test is not given with every administration of paper TOEFL test

In the other hand, there is the other format of TOEFL test, namely computer format. It has some sections as follows;

### **a. Listening**

Listening is examined to demonstrate their ability to understand spoken English, first the examines must listen to the passages on headphones as they see pictures on a

computer screen and then answer various types of questions about the passage that they just heard.

b. Structure

Structure test is given to demonstrate their ability to recognize grammatically correct English. Examinees also must look at sentences on a computer screen and either choose the correct way to complete sentences or identify errors in the sentences.

c. Reading

This section demands the examinees to understand written English. Examinees must read passage on a computer screen and answer various types of questions about the ideas and meaning of words in reading passages.

d. Writing

This section demands the examinees to produce, organized and meaningful English. Examinees also must write an essay on a given topic, either on the computer or by hand.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH**

1. To explain how students' experience at TOEFL at 6<sup>th</sup> semester of English Department of Pasir Pengaraian University is.
2. To explain what difficulties are found by the students in completing the TOEFL.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **A. Type of the Research**

The research was done on this problem through this type of research since it was aimed to examine the researcher's educational practice, improve instruction, and increase his students' achievement. This research was a descriptive research since it fulfilled the criteria to find out the solution to real problems of the

researcher about students' TOEFL skill.

### **B. Location and Participants**

The participants of this research were the sixth semester students of English Department of Lecturers training and education faculty of Pasir Pengaraian University. This research was conducted in English Department of Lecturers training and Education Faculty of Pasir Pengaraian University

### **C. Instrumentation**

In conducting this research, there were some instruments used to get the data. The data were collected by using questionnaires, observation checklist, field note, and interview to describe the situation during the research.

### **D. Data Collection Technique**

To collect the data, the researcher gave students questionnaires related to their experience and problems on completing TOEFL test. In order to get more data, he also took some note from his teaching experience and did interview to the respondents.

### **E. Data Analysis Technique**

Content analysis was used to analyze the data gained. The steps are gathering, reading, classifying and interpreting.

### **F. Procedure**

In conducting this research, the researcher used his class teaching experience in started from the first meeting till the sixteenth meeting.

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Findings**

In this part, the researcher discusses about the research findings

based on the observations checklists, field notes, interview, and questionnaires obtained during the research progress. This was intended to answer the research question of "How is students' experience at TOEFL" and "What difficulties are found by the sixth semester students of English department of Pasir Pengaraian University?".

Pertaining to the data gained, the researcher found the respondents' views related to students' experienced and problem in TOEFL test. The finding is explained based on the order of the skill available in TOEFL test its self, namely listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension and writing.

## B. How is the students' experience at TOEFL?

From the data collected through questionnaires and field note, It can be analyzed that most of the students have problems in completing the TOEFL test. Most of the problems found are about the two main important factors in completing the test, namely the strategy and the students' English skills.

First, it is about the students' view on the important of strategies in completing TOEFL test. The researcher sums his data on the table 1, as follows:

**Table 1: The average of students' view on factors influence TOEFL test**

NO	FACTORS INFLUENCE	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	Strategies on completing TOEFL test	6%	26%	2%	4%	2%
2	English skills	10%	20%	2%	6%	2%

From table 1, it can be seen that 26% students gave answers Agree (A) and 6% students respond strongly agree. It means that most of the students agree that strategies on completing TOEFL are very

important, and it influences the success of the test. While 6% of the students answer neutral and disagree. Similarly, having English skill is also important to the students who take the TOEFL. Where, 30% of students agree and the rest, 10%, are neutral and disagrees about it.

Second, it is the students' view on the important of strategies in completing TOEFL test. The average percentage can be seen from the table 2.

**Table 2: The average of students' experience on TOEFL test**

N O	EXPERIENCE IN COMPLETING TOEFL	SA	A	N	DA	SDA
1	Having strategies in TOEFL	4%	18%	4%	8%	6%
2	Having English skills	8%	13%	9%	8%	2%

Table 2 shows that 22 % students agree that they have their own strategy in completing TOEFL test, while 4 % are neutral and 14 % of the students disagree with it. And for having English skills, there are 21% agree, 9 % are neutral and 10 % got disagree.

From table 1 and 2, it can be concluded that there is different findings between the students' view and experience on having strategies and English skills in completing TOEFL test. First, the students agree that strategy (32%) and English skill (30%) are important. Contrary to their experience, only 22 % of the students that they agree that they have their own strategy in completing the TOEFL test and 21% agree that English skill influence their TOEFL test experience. Shortly, there is a different fact between the students' view and their real experience in completing the TOEFL test.

## C. What difficulties are found by the sixth semester students?

### 1. Listening Comprehension

**Table 3: Listening experience; Problem, Reasons and Effect among students**

Total Respondents (%)	Problem	Reasons	Effect
28	Get difficulties to understand the spoken language, strategies to answer, the material of the test.	1.The speaker speaks too fast. 2.The material is hard to comprehend.	Misunderstood to the spoken language meaning. Incorrectly answer given.
10	Unfamiliar with certain words.	The accent of some words almost similar.	Could not decide what the correct word is.
2	Almost no problem		

The problem faced by the students in listening section test is that they get difficulties to understand the spoken language, strategies to answer, the material of the test. It is caused the speaker speaks too fast and the material is hard to comprehend. As the result, they misunderstood to get the meaning of the spoken language. The other problem found is that there are some unfamiliar words listened while the spoken language is listened.

### 2. Structure and Written Expression

**Table 4: Structure and written expression; Problem, Reasons and Effect among students**

Total Resp. %	Problem	Reasons	Effect
32	Have no good strategies in completing the questions, get difficulties in determining the subject and the verb of sentences.	1. Lack of knowledge on the strategies. 2. Could not differentiate which word function as a subject or a verb of a sentence.	Always give an incorrect answer to the question given.
5	Problematic on written expression test.	3.Confused to determine one of the incorrect words	Incorrect answer or a blank

		from four left. underlined words.
3	Almost no problem with structure and written expression	

In structure and written expression section, the problems are they have no good strategies in completing the questions; they get difficulties in determining the subject and the verb of sentences. Then, they are also problematic on written expression test. The reasons given are lack of knowledge on the strategies and could not differentiate which words function as a subject or a verb of a sentence. The effect is students give incorrect answers or give left answers.

### 3. Reading comprehension

**Table 5: Reading comprehension; Problem, Reasons and Effect among students**

Total Resp	Problem	Reasons	Effect
35	Get difficulties to understand the meaning of written English.	Limited of vocabularies and some phrases.	Could not understand the whole text meaning.
5	Could not catch the all idea from the passages given.	The time had is limited.	Could not decide what the correct word is.

In reading section, students get difficulties to understand the meaning of written English. They also could not catch the all idea from the passages given. The problem happened because they have limited of vocabularies and some phrases. Moreover, the time available for the section is limited for them.

#### 4. Test of Written English

**Table 6: Written English; Problem, Reasons and Effect among students**

Total Resp	Problem	Reasons	Effect
33	Get difficulties to start writing an essay.	Get block minded and the unfamiliar topic.	Spending time to think what to write and how to.
5	Hard to develop the topic of the essay.	Do not have well knowledge in developing a topic of essay.	Produce a short paragraph not an essay
2	Almost no problem		

From the written test, students have difficulties to start writing an essay and hard to develop the topic of the essay. The reason given because of block minded and the unfamiliar topic. The effect of the problems are the students spend longer time to think what to write and how to. And they could not write a complete essay. Frequently, they just write a paragraph than an essay.

#### FURTHER PLAN

The next plan to do is to continue the research as to find the appropriate formats of teaching and learning TOEFL for students of Pasir pengaraian University.

#### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

From the two research questions planned, first question is "How is students' experience at TOEFL". The finding shows that most of the students do not have good preparation in completing the test. It can be shown from the result of the analysis where most of students complete their TOEFL test without having good strategy and having English skills.

Second question is "What difficulties are found by the sixth semester students of English department of Pasir Pengaraian University. It can be summarized that in listening section the problem faced are that they get difficulties to understand the spoken language, strategies to answer, the material of the test. The speaker speaks too fast and the hard materials are the reason given. In structure and written expression section, the problems are they have no good strategies; get difficulties in determining the subject and the verb of sentences. The reasons given are lack of knowledge on the strategies and could not differentiate which words function as a subject or a verb of a sentence. In reading section, students get difficulties to understand the meaning of written English. They also could not catch the all idea from the passages given. The problem happened because they have limited of vocabularies and some phrases. Moreover, the time available for the section is limited for them. From the written test, students have difficulties to start writing an essay and hard to develop the topic of the essay. The reason given because of block minded and the unfamiliar topic. The effect of the problems are the students spend longer time to think what to write and how to. And they could not write a complete essay. Frequently, they just write a paragraph than an essay. Finally, the effects of the problems are students always give incorrect answers and they cannot produce a good essay.

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